

Senate Bill 283

By: Senators Mullis of the 53rd, Pearson of the 51st and Heath of the 31st

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

To amend Chapter 4 of Title 1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to holidays and observances, so as to create Confederate Heritage and History Month; to provide for legislative findings; to encourage observances and celebrations of Confederate Heritage and History Month; to provide for statutory construction; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Chapter 4 of Title 1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to holidays and observances, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

"1-4-18.

(a) The General Assembly hereby finds and determines that:

(1) The Confederate States of America was created in 1861 as a result of decades of growing cultural, economic, social, and political differences between the southern states and other sections of the United States, particularly New England, and which, as a result of the election of 1860, precipitated the secession of thirteen southern states from the union;

(2) Some of Georgia's greatest statesmen, including Robert Toombs, Benjamin Harvey Hill, and Confederate Vice President Alexander H. Stephens, served the Confederate government in high positions;

(3) Approximately 125,000 Georgians served and 25 percent lost their lives defending the Confederate cause during the ensuing four years of conflict;

(4) Georgians James Longstreet and John Brown Gordon were prominent Confederate generals;

(5) Many of the war's prominent battles were fought in Georgia, including Chickamauga, Resaca, Kennesaw, the siege of Atlanta, and Jonesboro. Much of Georgia was laid waste during Sherman's march to the sea and Georgians of all classes and every

1 profession gave generously and sacrificed much to the Confederacy and its cause. It is
2 the most momentous period in the history of the South and our state since the American
3 Revolution and deserves official honors and recognition; and

4 (6) Tourism is a great economic resource in Georgia; and historical, heritage, and
5 cultural inheritance are among the tourism industry's most popular attractions. Georgia's
6 Confederate heritage, physical artifacts and battle sites, and historic events and persons,
7 not only attract visitors, they are potentially of even greater importance and benefit to our
8 state's economy. Increased development of our state's Confederate history and heritage
9 as part of the tourism industry will be enhanced through recognizing, celebrating, and
10 advertising that heritage and history.

11 (b) The month of April of each year is hereby designated as Confederate History and
12 Heritage Month, and shall be set aside to honor, observe, and celebrate the Confederate
13 States of America, its history, those who served in its armed forces and government, and
14 all those millions of its citizens of various races and ethnic groups and religions who
15 contributed in sundry and myriad ways to the cause of Southern Independence from its
16 founding on February 4, 1861, in Montgomery, Alabama, until the Confederate ship CSS
17 *Shenandoah* sailed into Liverpool Harbor and surrendered to British authorities on
18 November 6, 1865.

19 (c) Officials and departments of state, county, and municipal governments, boards of
20 education, elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, businesses, and all
21 citizens are encouraged to participate in programs, displays, and activities that
22 commemorate and honor our shared history and cultural inheritance throughout each April
23 during Confederate History and Heritage Month.

24 (d) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to limit or impair any ability of a
25 department or agency of this state or any county or municipality, local board of education,
26 or other subdivision of this state to adopt and implement reasonable regulations to prevent
27 unlawful speech or expression including, but not limited to, behavior that disrupts or
28 involves substantial disorder or the invasion of the rights of others in events and activities
29 associated with Confederate History and Heritage Month.

30 (e) The Civil War Commission is encouraged to develop a curriculum that may be used
31 to instruct and inform students in elementary and secondary schools and in colleges and
32 universities about Georgia's Confederate heritage and history during Confederate History
33 and Heritage Month. The Civil War Commission is also encouraged to develop any
34 information, advertisements, press releases, and other information relative to Confederate
35 History and Heritage Month and to distribute the same to state and local governments, the
36 public, and the media."

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- SECTION 2.**
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- All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.